

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

311654Z May 06

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 003293

SIPDIS

NSC STAFF FOR SINGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/31/2026

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR URGES INTERIOR MINISTER ACTION ON  
DETAINEE ABUSE CASES AND SUPPORT OF NGOS

REF: A. CAIRO 3270

[B](#). CAIRO 3161

[C](#). CAIRO 3106

Classified by Ambassador Francis Ricciardone for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) In a May 31 meeting, Ambassador urged Interior Minister Habib Adly to respond seriously and quickly to recent allegations of excessive force against demonstrators and charges that detained demonstrators had been tortured: The GOE should investigate, announce the results, and, if there is evidence of violations, punish those responsible. The GOE should also consider whether training could help reduce such apparent abuses. The Ambassador urged the GOE to investigate transparently such charges. The cases of two detainees, Mohammed Sharkawy and Karim Shaer were of particular concern. Adly denied that the two had been tortured but said their claims were being investigated by the independent Public Prosecutor. Adly stressed that the Muslim Brotherhood were exploiting issues like the Judges Club controversy, fomenting protests, and provoking the police to advance their agenda. The Ambassador urged that the GOE register and legalize the Cairo offices of IRI and NDI - stressing that they should be viewed as allies rather than threats. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador called on Interior Minister Adly on May 31 to underscore USG concerns about reports of police brutality and the torture of detainees, widely circulated in the domestic and international media following a series of anti-GOE demonstrations in May (reftels). Stories and images of recent police violence and claims of mistreatment by detainees were resonating not only abroad, but also, we believed, among the Egyptian people. These pictures and reports may not tell the whole story, but they are nonetheless making a very negative impact, the Ambassador continued. The cases of Mohammed Sharkawy and Karim Shaer, activists detained on the fringes of a demonstration May 25, have attracted particular attention because of their graphic charges of torture and abuse, the Ambassador noted. The GOE could not afford to ignore the appearance of legal violations and should investigate, announce the results, punish anyone found guilty, and take appropriate actions such as training to prevent recurrence.

[1](#)3. (C) Adly asserted that charges of police excesses were greatly exaggerated, and torture charges fabricated, by leftist and Islamist activists, who have been particularly focused on attacking and undermining the Ministry of Interior. Nasserists, leftists, and Islamist sympathizers in the opposition media readily provided a platform for these complaints, he added. If so many instances of abuse took place, victims and groups should come forward with evidence instead of relying on innuendo, Adly stated. In spite of all the stories and reports, he continued, only two (Sharkawy and Shaer) of 400 detainees arrested, have filed complaints.

[1](#)4. (C) Adly adamantly denied that either detainee had been abused - "If I found any of my men were involved in such abuse, I would turn them over to the prosecution immediately," he maintained. "And if I saw one of my officers abusing someone on the street, I'd slaughter him myself. That kind of behavior offends police officers more than anyone else, as they consider themselves protectors of citizens. Of course, some of these demonstrators deliberately insult and provoke the police." Adly confirmed that Sharkawy and Shaer were still in custody and said that their complaints have been forwarded to the Public Prosecution for investigation. In investigating the charges, the Public Prosecution has the discretion to call for forensic investigation of the prisoners, using their own doctors, but the matter is entirely out of the Interior Ministry's hands, he maintained.

[1](#)5. (C) The Ambassador responded that if the GOE is investigating their charges, they should publicize the fact and not give the impression that they are stonewalling. In the absence of transparent investigation, many in Egypt and abroad will believe the worst of what is being reported.

Adly accepted the idea and instructed an aide to pass it on to the prosecution. Ambassador recalled our standing offer to consider expanding police training to new areas - for example, we could explore programs to train Egyptian trainers in crowd control techniques to build officers' resistance to provocations. Adly did not respond.

16. (C) Adly told the Ambassador that the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) had been exploiting the democracy agenda, and the recent Judges Club controversy in particular, to advance their own political agenda. The MB provided the core of the organization and manpower of recent demonstrations, he asserted. The MB have become particularly cocky and aggressive since their success in the fall 2005 elections, Adly opined, adding that their success "proved" that the parliamentary elections had not been falsified. "If I had been dictating the results, I certainly would not have given the MB 88 seats," he stated. The MB are a threat not only in Egypt but are on the ascent in Jordan, Kuwait, and elsewhere, their goal is to seize the reins of government across the region, which would be a calamity for U.S. interests, he warned. The Ambassador responded that the USG is no fan of the MB and does not wish to see them succeed. However, he continued, the GOE should not let its fear of the MB impede the progress and political development of the country. If this happens, the MB will win.

17. (C) The Ambassador also flagged for Adly's attention the current applications of IRI and NDI to formalize and legally establish their offices in Cairo. Noting the recent campaign against the groups in the pro-government media, the Ambassador stressed that the two prestigious American private institutes operate in a completely open and transparent manner. Their activities will support rather than undermine President Mubarak's stated goals for political development. For example, they had trained Egyptians to conduct proper, lawful monitoring of last year's elections. In reply, Adly noted that "one of these groups has launched its activities before it has legal permission to do so," (an apparent reference to IRI's May 24 "Open House" which included a press briefing on its engagement with political parties in Egypt). The Ambassador stressed that both groups wish to legalize their status here and repeated that all of their activities are conducted with complete transparency and are fully in line with President Mubarak's own reform program. We hoped that the GOE would view them as friends and assets, certainly not as undermining national security.

RICCIARDONE